Lumding-Silchar conversion work

1160. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to militant's attack, the Lumding-Silchar conversion work has been stopped since last one month;

(b) whether it is also a fact that employees/innocent people lost their lives including the damage of construction material worth nearly crore of rupees during the attack due to lack of security; and

(c) what step Government are contemplating to provide security by para-military force to the workers for carrying out the conversion work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The work is adversely affected in hill section after the militant attack on Railway staff last month.

(b) In the militant attack on 06.10.2006, 12 persons including 11 Railway personnel were killed and two vehicles were damaged.

(c) Security has been provided by State Government for some of the sites. In addition, one Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) company is being deployed in sensitive Retzol area.

Attachment of pantry car in Kaifiyat Express

1161. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the passengers travelling in the Kaifiyat Express train running Delhi-Azamgarh-Delhi have to face a lot of inconvenience and difficulty to get tea, break-fast, lunch or dinner as there is no pantry car for this purpose attached with the train;

(b) if so, whether there is a proposal under active consideration of Government to attach a pantry car with this train; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) As per policy, pantry cars are attached on Rajdhani/

Shatabdi/Premier/Superfast and Mail/Express trains. Priority for allotment of pantry cars in Rajdhani Express, long distance Premier/Superfast trains, Mail/Express trains with more than 24 hours running time each way and the remaining trains with preference to those trains in which vestibules are provided. No definite time frame can be given for provision of pantry cars in different trains including Kaifiyat Express as this is subject to availability of pantry cars and priority of the train.

FDI in Railways

1162. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Railways proposes to open up most of its activities to private agencies,

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the reaction of the private agencies on the proposal;

(c) whether FDI would also be permitted in such activities; and

(d) if so, the extent to and areas in which FDI would be allowed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) A number of areas/activities such as upgradation of stations at major metropolitan cities, establishment of super speciality hospitals, setting up of manufacturing units for rolling stock, infrastructure projects for port connectivity through Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) and several activities in catering/tourism and hospitality area have been identified for possible execution through public-private partnership route.

(c) and (d) In terms of the Industrial (Development and Regulation) Act 1951, 'Railway Transport' sector is reserved exclusively for Public Sector. It has ben clarified by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion that no Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is permitted in passenger/freight transportation and pushing and towing services as these services are reserved for Public Sector. Foreign Direct Investment upto 100% is, however, permitted under the automatic route in respect of construction and maintenance of rail/beds bridges and tunnels etc.